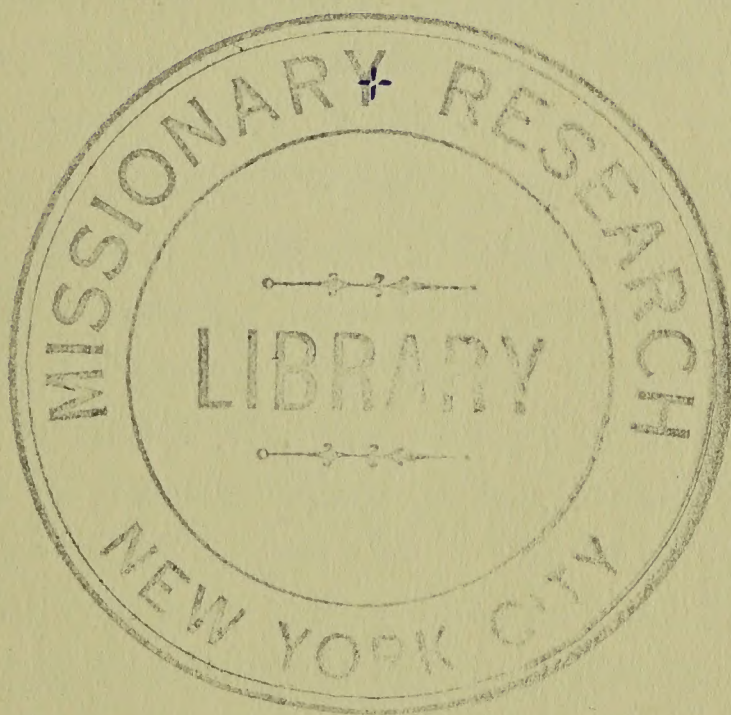


Pam  
Misc.

1628

# Spiritual Vitality in MISSIONS

William P. Schell



AN ADDRESS

delivered at the 147th General  
Assembly of the Presbyterian  
Church in the U. S. A.  
Cincinnati, Ohio, May 29, 1935

*Printed at request of General Assembly*







# Spiritual Vitality in MISSIONS

**I**N THESE closing hours of this General Assembly your Board of Foreign Missions brings to you its 98th Annual Report. In the nearly 100 years of its existence your Board has endeavored faithfully and conscientiously to represent the Church in its vision of a world in need, in the stewardship and preaching of the gospel of Christ, in the conviction that there is no hope in the world apart from Him, and in a loyal adherence to the fundamentals of the evangelical faith. On this platform it stands now. As this 98th year closes, your Board stands out as the largest Mission Board in the world—greatest in its scope (working in sixteen countries), largest in its staff (1,344 missionaries and over 8,000 native workers), most comprehensive in its methods, strongest in its financial resources. In the life of the Church no cause has been more inspiring, none more uplifting to all our activities, none as unselfish, none more heroic than this program to preach Jesus Christ to the world. It is a solemn thing to realize that when the foreign mission service of a Church prospers, the Church is blessed, and that whenever a Church is false to its world mission or disloyal to its missionaries, the spiritual life of the Church declines. We move forward into every worth-while service as we move forward with Him into His world.

There have been discouragements in the year that has just closed, and we would not hide them from you. Your missionaries have lived their lives and preached the gospel in a world in upheaval; in the midst of an intense rising nationalism; in nations in some instances increasingly pagan and



anti-religious; in the face of growing skepticism, even in the home Church, as to the validity of Christianity; in the discouragements arising from the spiritual condition of the Church in the United States. During the year your Board was able to commission and send out only nine new missionaries, while in the same period the gross loss, due to honorable retirement, deaths and withdrawals was 91. The net loss, therefore, was 82, and the total number of foreign missionaries in active service is 1,344.

Your Board had hoped to be able to report to you an increase in receipts from living donors, but this hope has been disappointed. These receipts show a falling off of \$99,283.50 as compared with the previous year, or about 4½ per cent. In all cases expenditures have been kept within those authorized but, due to this decline in receipts, the Board comes to this Assembly with a new deficit of \$26,437.41 which, added to the accumulated deficit with which the year began, brings the total deficit to \$545,544.34.

## A YEAR OF ENCOURAGEMENT

There have been discouragements—BUT IT HAS BEEN A YEAR OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND VICTORY. Those of us who are closest to the enterprise and who live with it every day thank God for this victorious year in the mission field.

LET US BEGIN BY HOLDING UP BEFORE YOU THE SPIRITUAL MORALE OF YOUR MISSIONARIES. All of her fellow missionaries scattered throughout the world, few of whom had ever met her, would join in this touching tribute passed by the West Africa Mission on the life and service of Mrs. Susan R. Underhill, one of our two colored missionaries in the field, who entered into her reward a few months ago:

“She lived and labored with us but five short



years, but the sweet influence of her joyous life cannot be measured in terms of time, for hers was a life of love, and love lives on.

“During the days of her sojourn she was a tireless itinerator, accompanying her husband on long and exhausting tours through the forest and by the sea, spurred on over the tortuous trails by a passion for the Saviour who is not willing that any should perish. Among the warm impulsive bodies of the bush, and among the less responsive tribes of the beach, she served with a love and friendliness that called forth a warm response in the hearts of all. In the home, in the classroom, in the villages, everywhere she went she left a lingering impress of Christlikeness, and that impress abides; her fruits remain.

“Hers was a sunny nature, a spirit serene, a heart composed, because Christ dwelt within. We remember the radiance of her smile that was as a lighted candle brightening the path of all who met her on the way. The testimony of her Cameroun friends rings true to the memory of each of us, ‘A mbe evovoe nlem’ (She was of a quiet heart).

“She, who so faithfully trod the trails of the African forest, now walks the Highway of the Lord. From countless villages where she sojourned she has gone on to the City of God. From the huts of friends newborn in Christ she has been taken to meet her Friend on High. But on many a trail, in many a town, she continues to abide in the hearts of her people, and in her death still carries on the work of witness for which she so gladly gave her life. May the Comforter be very graciously near to bless the husband who is left to walk the lonely way.”

IN YOUR MISSIONARIES—IN THEIR LIVING AND IN THEIR DYING—YOU BEHOLD THE BEST THAT THE CHURCH HAS TO OFFER. They resent being placed on pedestals, they do not recognize themselves as



heroic, but in all their work they reveal to the home Church the possibilities of a victorious life in Christ. One missionary in India wrote: "We have had many problems, many difficulties, always a shortage of funds and an inadequate staff, but in spite of this the work has gone on." This spirit of perseverance and hopefulness is also revealed by them when they come home on furlough. Listen to this report given by a missionary on the completion of his furlough in America: "In the deputation work in the churches at home I have spoken all told 912 times, 543 of these with films. I have used the costumes for the eight boys and girls 226 times. The first year I traveled 21,655 miles by train, bus and auto. Last August I bought a second-hand Buick and have driven it since then nearly 15,000 miles. I have in two years slept in well over 300 beds. I have visited almost all of the twenty-odd Sunday schools that have a share in my support scattered from New York to Texas and from Georgia to Illinois, with six others in between.

"All this has been a glorious adventure and a great privilege. I have enjoyed it immensely as I have tried to share with others in the home land and the home Church something of the life that has been ours out in Hindustan."

As one who is not a missionary but who knows and loves them all, I hold up your missionaries before you this morning. They are your sons and daughters. They have gone out from your churches and you have basked in their reflected glory. You know them. VERY WELL; DO NOT MISJUDGE THEM, NOR SLANDER THEM. DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELVES TO BELIEVE THINGS ABOUT THEM THAT YOU KNOW ARE NOT TRUE. Why do they offer themselves as missionaries? Because of adventure, or for a "lark" or to teach mathematics? By no means. Nothing but a conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of



God, nothing but an abiding faith that He died on the cross to save the world, nothing but an unshaken assurance that He rose from the dead and is alive today can lead a man to leave his country, his home and everything life holds dear here and to bury himself in the jungles of Africa, or in the great cities of the Orient. Love of Jesus Christ sent them out and consecrated devotion to Him and His cross and His gospel keep them out there. They do not ask for pity in their difficulties. But they do ask, and they have every right to ask, and to expect, your understanding sympathy, your prayers, your gifts and your love.

## PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

IT HAS BEEN A YEAR OF OUTSTANDING SPIRITUAL VICTORY ON THE MISSION FIELD. First of all, in the preaching of the gospel and in evangelistic results. In the face of paganism and of wide hostility to Christ over 7,000 non-Christians were won to our Lord and were received into the Church on confession of their faith in Him. Thousands more were reached and enrolled in training conferences and brought under the teaching of the Church. In some countries, for example, Mexico, this straight evangelism offers us our greatest opportunity. Listen to these words from the Mexico Mission:

“We are convinced that from now on we must depend upon personal seeking of souls for Christ, and upon personal dealing with Christians to strengthen and build them up more than upon institutions or special plans of work. Our institutions have a rather uncertain existence at present, but the opportunity for personal evangelism and personal comradeship is greater than ever. We need to search for new ways of making contacts and then make these truly effective in reaching souls for the Saviour.”



Here, for example, is a new type of work carried on by Rev. Norman W. Taylor. The Mexican army, instead of remaining in barracks, patrols the highways, the soldiers spending half their time in outpost duty in small groups along the roads or in the villages. Mr. Taylor, while distributing literature, came one day to the highest point along the road and tried to enter the outpost. The soldiers were very hostile and one fanatic tried to force him to leave the enclosure. At that moment the Commanding Officer appeared. When Mr. Taylor explained his errand, he called his men together and recommended the literature, took him to fifteen camps, and personally superintended the distribution of the gospel portions and tracts. Camp after camp was opened to Mr. Taylor and everywhere commanding officers have welcomed him and facilitated his work. In describing the results he writes these thrilling words:

“Since this work opened up six regiments of cavalry and three battalions of infantry have been reached. Of these, two regiments and one battalion have been so thoroughly evangelized that I believe practically every man has had the gospel presented to him. I believe that I can safely say, without any fear of exaggeration, that between seven and eight hundred men have expressed the desire to follow Christ. Among the officers, one major, four captains, and fifteen lieutenants accepted Christ, and greatly helped us by their interest in seeing that all the men had an opportunity of hearing the message.” And there are some who say that there should be no chaplains in the army!

This story, in one form or another, is paralleled in many countries on the mission field. Henry Martyn in Persia thought he could die content if he could see one Moslem brought to Christ. As the Board's Report indicates, hundreds of Moslems



have come to Christ during the year, many of them undergoing great suffering because of the step they have taken. The great revival in Africa has continued. Enormous congregations attend all the services. They come in unprecedented numbers to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Before one can be received into the Church he is required, ordinarily, to wait for two years of testing and training.

In India there has been an increasing development in the movement in behalf of the 50,000,000 "outcastes" who constitute fourteen per cent of the population. They have been falling away to Christianity and Islam until Hindus are concerned over the power they may have in Government.

Two of your missionaries in Siam reported an interesting visit to a village in which were a number of Lao slaves. Only a handful of these slaves had ever received baptism. The missionaries gathered together these slaves and their children and talked to them about Christ, distributing literature and teaching them the Bible. The missionaries wrote:

"When it came to the last day, the teachers were all pretty well discouraged. They did not feel that they had made more than a surface impression on any one. So the last evening the Siamese evangelist covered a wooden cross, about two feet high, with red paper. At the foot of the cross he placed a clump of soft clay. A very simple statement was made that we loved Jesus and tried to serve Him. In the past ten days we had tried to make Him known to those who had attended the meetings. If anyone there felt that he loved Jesus, too, and would like to follow Him, would he please come and take a tiny paper flag and place it at the foot of the cross. To the surprise of every one seven men, ten women and twelve or fourteen teen-age young people came forward."



## FOUNDED ON THE BIBLE

THE SPIRITUAL VITALITY OF THE CHURCH ON THE MISSION FIELD IS ALSO SEEN IN THE FACT THAT IT IS GROUNDED ON THE WORD OF GOD. We are hearing a great deal nowadays about "Bible-believing" Christians. Well, the place where you will find them is on the mission field. It is a fair statement to make today that, proportionately speaking, there are more Bible-believing, Bible-loving and Bible-living church members on the mission field than there are in the Church at home. The Bible occupies no such place in the life of the Church here as there. Indeed, many churches in those lands were literally founded by the Bible. Those of you who heard Rev. William N. Blair of Korea, when he was here on furlough a year ago, will remember his story of the British martyr, Thomas, in Korea—how he took passage on a ship, the "General Sherman," to Korea, how the boat was trapped between pontoons of fire there, and how the passengers and crew were forced to leap into the water. You will remember his description of this Christian martyr: "The Koreans say that all the foreigners fought to save their lives except one who acted very strangely. Making no effort to save himself, he waded ashore with his arms full of books and tossed them into the arms of the crowd as they clubbed him down. All along the Tai Tong River, clear to the sea, you will find Christian churches wherever Thomas landed and left copies of the Bible." You will also remember his story of the Korean colporteur who, laying down his life on the banks of the Yalu River, threw pages from the Bible into the air, exclaiming as he did so: "Everywhere the leaves of this book touch the shore, a Christian community will arise."

In view of these origins, it is not surprising to find church-wide study of the Word of God in Korea and a Church whose activities are built upon



His word. What a blessing would come to the home Church if we could have Bible conferences such as those in Korea, enrolling from 500 to 1,000 women or an equal number of men, many of them trudging many weary miles to study the Word! And hear this testimony from North China: "There have been during the year more requests than ever for Bible classes, more opportunities for preaching, more avenues for personal work, more students in government schools wanting instruction in Christian truths. Along with the inspiration of these open doors goes the depression arising out of inability to supply enough workers to meet the demands." Over 140,000 children in your mission fields were enrolled in Sunday schools, studying the Bible regularly, and many thousands more were enrolled in Bible Institutes and Conferences.

## SACRIFICE AND PRAYER

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE NATIONAL CHURCHES IS ALSO MANIFEST IN A DEGREE OF SACRIFICE AND PRAYER THE HOME CHURCH WOULD DO WELL TO EMULATE. The native Christians, during the year, gave in contributions or paid in fees a total of \$1,639,045. Only when you stop to think of their incomes can you have any appreciation of this sacrifice. In addition to these gifts of money there have been gifts of hundreds of days of labor. We in the home Church know no such sacrifices as the Christians in these non-Christian lands make because they have given their hearts to Him who gave everything for them. One reason why they give such large amounts is because they are not overconcerned with budgets, quotas, allocations or apportionments. Many of those churches have budgets, but they always look upon a budget as a stepping-stone to something higher—never as a goal in itself. The average Christian on the mission field



does not compare the giving of his church with its record of the previous year nor with the records of other churches. He simply asks: "Am I giving as much as I should give and can give to the Lord in view of what He has given to me?" When that spirit takes possession of the home churches, our Boards will no longer report deficits, for our budgets will burst open with new spiritual vitality and power.

And they are PRAYING. A missionary in Japan writes this description of the Week of Prayer which should give us pause: "The Week of Prayer during the first week in January is widely observed by all branches of the Christian Church in Japan. The subjects of the meetings were those prepared by the Committee in London for use throughout the world, and the Christians felt a thrill at the thought of their praying in unison with bodies of believers in all lands. I had a bit of a guilty feeling, for I was not at all sure that the Churches in America were observing the custom any more. The evening in which international questions were part of the program was marked by some fine prayers, breathing a Christian spirit of world-wide brotherhood and international peace. Remember that they are praying."

Another missionary in Japan writes: "During the Week of Prayer our Seminary (Nihon Shingakko) held its 6:30 a.m. prayer services every morning with a full attendance of the student body and faculty. Some had to travel six and seven miles to get there. It was most inspiring. After the hour of service we had a simple breakfast together consisting of plain boiled rice and a coarse vegetable soup. I sometimes marvel at the enthusiasm that is kept up under the conditions in which most of our boys must live."



## THE GOSPEL FOR ALL OF LIFE

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE MISSIONARIES AND THE NATIVE CHRISTIANS IS WITNESSED IN THEIR RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO PHASE OF LIFE WHICH IS NOT TOUCHED BY CHRIST. Through your mission schools and colleges, through the miracles of healing in hospitals and dispensaries, through countless movements for social and economic justice, through temperance organizations and anti-opium programs, through agricultural rehabilitation, and through a definite program to put an end to war and to promote good will among men, the missionary enterprise recognizes the power of the gospel and applies it to human life. This word needs special emphasis in view of two extremes of thinking in the Church, neither of which is approved by your Board nor by the Presbyterian Church. At one extreme are those who say that missionaries should confine all of their efforts to preaching, that there should be no schools or colleges or hospitals as a part of the missionary enterprise. If this argument is valid, then we should have no Sunday schools or Christian colleges or hospitals under the Christian Church in America. At the other extreme is the point of view which found some countenance in "Rethinking Missions," that medical missionaries, for example, should not engage in evangelistic work in the hospitals.

Some years ago, while on a visit to China, I had the unusual privilege of seeing a man recover his sight. He was the Governor of a large province who had made a journey of 600 miles to one of our mission hospitals as that was the nearest hospital he could find. On the day of our visit the surgeon removed the bandages from the Governor's eyes, as he lay in the dark room in our inadequate hospital, and he saw for the first time in many years, the blue sky, the green grass and men walk-



ing. He arose from his cot, fell on his knees, and kissed the surgeon's hand again and again in gratitude. Now, the medical missionary might have said to him: "Your Excellency, don't mention it. It has been a great privilege to restore your eyesight. Go and enjoy your sight." That in itself would have been a Christian deed. But I have always honored him for what he did. He said to the kneeling patient: "My friend, stand on your feet, for I also am a man. Just as I, a follower of the Great Physician, have been able by the skill of surgery to enable you to see with your eyes, so also as His follower I am not willing to allow you to leave this hospital without appealing to you to accept Him who can make you see for the first time with your soul." And there in that room I saw a Governor of a Province rise from his knees and give his heart to Jesus Christ. Your Board conducts its work in the conviction that all missionaries should be evangelists.

## THE RISING TIDE OF YOUTH

This is your glorious work in His name. What are you going to do about it? The Presbyterian Church today, and all Churches, stand at the cross-roads in their Foreign Mission programs. On the one hand, we have a world torn to pieces, groping its way—yet ready for the message of the Saviour of the world. On the other hand, we have the Church hesitant, worldly, its mind on other things. In between, we see a rising generation of young people, offering their lives in places most of us would never be willing to enter. A few months ago a group of students at Hartford Theological Seminary offered themselves as a unit to any Board that would send them out to do Christian rural reconstruction work in China. A few weeks ago there appeared in our church papers a manifesto signed by fourteen students of Princeton Theologi-



cal Seminary, expressing their eagerness to preach the gospel of Christ in foreign lands and appealing to the Church, to individuals or local congregations "to share with us the responsibility resting upon all the followers of Christ, to send us out as your representatives to proclaim the message of salvation."

During this past year 260 young people have made contact with the Candidate Department of your Board for the first time, adding their names to the 695 already on the roll of correspondents. One young man wrote: "I cannot see why a little thing like lack of finances should prevent the Board from sending out the missionaries that are so sorely needed." Why, indeed?

Lift up your eyes on this army of youth. Then lift up your eyes to the fields waiting for them and, as you look, recall these words of a great preacher of yesterday: "Our missionary problems will be solved when our spiritual problems are solved, when we live daily in the sight of God. Our local church budgets are bankrupt because there are so many of us whose spiritual lives are bankrupt. We count our houses, cars, stocks and bonds. We count every thing and every body—except God!"

Let us count God and His Son Jesus Christ and go forward in His name.



THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

156 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y.